

Discipline of the British Army.

The Duke of Cambridge has recently issued a circular letter to the commanding officers throughout the army, in which he says his attention has been called to the prevalence of acts of insubordination, committed chiefly by very young soldiers, and requests that the subject may be seriously considered by all officers commanding corps. He says:—"In dealing with cases of insubordination, it is essential to take into careful consideration the circumstances under which they were committed, and to discriminate between those committed under aggravation and those done deliberately. The former are frequently the result of a hot and hasty temper, the latter spring from confirmed wilfulness and bad spirit. A soldier in the first year or two of his service has not always been able to shake himself free from the effect of his early training in civil life, and frequently does not realize the consequences attendant upon acts of insubordination in the Army. His Royal Highness is of opinion that in many instances the want of tact and proper manner on the part of non-commissioned officers gives rise to these acts of violence on the part of young soldiers, who are frequently very sorry for their conduct when they have time to reflect. In cases where a commanding officer is of opinion that an act of insubordination is attributable to this cause, his Royal Highness considers that a serious admonition, (joined, perhaps, to a slight punishment,) and an ample apology to the non-commissioned officer concerned, together with an expression of regret for his improper conduct by the prisoner, might meet the case. Commanding officers in their daily intercourse with their non-commissioned officers are urged to impress upon them the necessity for especial discretion in their dealings with young soldiers, warning them against all harshness of tone and manner in the delivery of orders or instructions. Inexperienced non-commissioned officers are sometimes too prone to confine men for trifling faults of temper that non-commissioned officers of standing would have dealt with by bringing the offender before the officer commanding his company."

Arrangements have been made at a meeting of commanding officers of volunteer corps representing England, Scotland, and Wales for a great rifle match amongst the best shooting battalions. Supposing that fifty battalions will compete, it was decided that the prizes should consist of one of £100, one of £60, one of £40, one of £30, one of £20; and that there should be an additional prize for every ten or fraction of ten battalions competing, in which case there would be a proportionate increase in the amount of each prize. The contest will take place between the 1st and 15th of May.

A special from Berlin states that a letter from Pelke Paulowite, who commanded the insurgents at the battle of Muratavizza, asserts that a force of 1,550 insurgents attacked 32,000 Turks. Only 7,000 of the latter returned to Gatzchka. About 800 were killed and the others were drowned or dispersed. The insurgents captured 675 rifles and four rifled cannons.

The great clock at Westminster is said by Sir E. Beckett to be the best clock in the kingdom. Each dial has 400 square feet of surface; the minute hands are 11 feet long; the winding up, which takes five hours, is done by hand.

The following particulars of an invention for securing the safe transport and storage of gunpowder, patented by Deputy Commissary Chambers, Control (late Military Store) Department, are furnished by a Scotch contemporary.—The powdercase or magazine is drum-shaped in form, and can be made of any required size, so as to conform to the exigencies of transport, and at the same time to be useful in storage. It consists of an outer case of galvanized sheet iron, pierced with several small holes, through which any moisture as steam may escape from the body of the magazine, when subjected to great heat, the holes being plugged with red lead. Next comes a lining of plaster of Paris, in a concrete state, one inch thick and coated on its interior surface with a thin layer of Portland cement. Inside this again is 1 1/2 inch thickness of plaster of Paris in powder, well pressed down. An intermediate casing of thin sheet iron galvanized comes next, within which is one inch thickness of ground cork; and, finally, an inner lining of sheet zinc. This forms the sides and bottom of the magazine, the lid being similarly constructed, and either screwed bodily into the mouth of the drum, so as to be easily removable, or hinged to it. In either case, the lid is provided with proper fastenings, and the meeting edges of the lid and body are hermetically sealed. The portable magazines measure about 32 inches in height, with a diameter of 28 inches, outside measurement—being but little larger than the portable magazines now in use. The effect of this method of construction is to obtain a very low conducting power, so low that on exposing a magazine to the heat of a fire sufficiently fierce to bring the outer casing to a welding heat, the temperature in the interior is raised to 214° to 219° Fahrenheit only. Another result is that, whilst practically fire-proof, the magazine is also damp-proof. On exposing the magazine to heat, the contained powder remains uninjured, instead of being spoilt, as in some cases it is, by the vaporisation of chemicals, with the object of rendering the powder incombustible. Before patenting his invention, Mr. Chambers—who was then stationed at Edinburgh—had his system thoroughly tested by Messrs Miller and Herbert, engineers, of the Heriotfield Works. The experiments showed conclusively that, however in case and continued the heat applied to the exterior of the case, the temperature within never exceeded 219° Fahrenheit.

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